

WHAT IS A TEACH-IN?

A Teach-In is a learning event. People come to a Teach-In to learn how to think more clearly and accurately about some of the issues which underlie a violent conflict they seek to help end. People organize Teach-Ins to stimulate interest and debate through providing people with the background they need to act effectively.

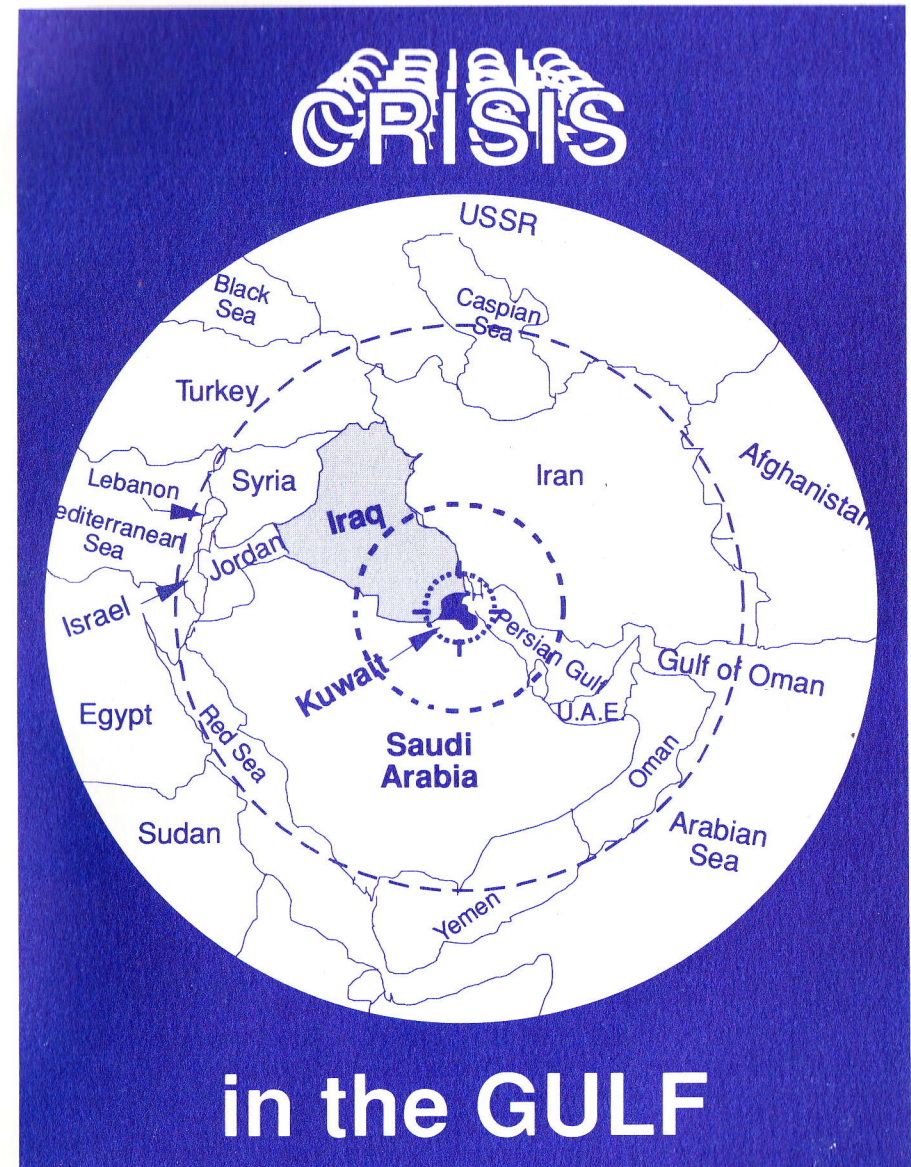
A Teach-In is more substantive than a rally, yet more consciously political than a scholarly conference. It provides its audience with real information and analysis, not just slogans; and the speakers offer different views as they challenge one another and the audience. But it is not "just talk." Information and analysis is brought to bear to advance the political and social process of building effective movements.

The first Teach-In was organized at the University of Michigan in early 1965 as the movement against the Vietnam War was beginning to grow in the United States. During the next few years, as the peace movement gained momentum, literally thousands of Teach-Ins were held around the country. Many were held at colleges and universities, but hundreds of community centers and local peace groups sponsored them, too.

In the course of the Teach-In movement, tens of thousands of people learned about the causes and dynamics of the Vietnam War and were drawn into action against it. Many of them became experts, developing their knowledge by debating supporters of the war who often attended Teach-Ins as well.

When the Vietnam War ended, the Teach-In movement subsided but did not disappear. The same form continued to be used to investigate other wars and conflicts, from Central America to Afghanistan to South Africa. And now, in that same broad tradition, a beginning is being made in the process of organizing a Teach-In movement on the Middle East crisis.*

* Taken from the *ORGANIZING TEACH-INS FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE* resource pamphlet, written by Michael Zweig. To obtain a copy write or call: The International Jewish Peace Union (IJPU New York), PO Box 20854, Tompkins Square Station, New York, NY 10009, 212-979-8754.



in the GULF

Institute for Policy Studies

CRISIS IN THE GULF

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Chronology of Events

1990

- July 18* Iraq accuses Kuwait of stealing \$2.4 billion worth of Iraqi oil and depressing the price of oil.
- July 24* Iraq moves 30,000 troops to the border of Kuwait.
- July 27* OPEC meeting in Geneva raises oil price to \$21 a barrel.
- Aug 2* Iraq invades Kuwait. UN Security Council passes resolution 660 condemning the invasion. U.S., USSR, and NATO denounce invasion.
- Aug 6* UN Security Council passes Resolution 661 authorizing economic sanctions against Iraq. Bush orders U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia.
- Aug 7* U.S. sends first troops into the Gulf region.
- Aug 8* Iraq annexes Kuwait.
- Aug 9* UN Security Council unanimously passes Resolution 662 declaring Iraq's annexation of Kuwait null and void.
- Aug 12* U.S. announces the beginning of an "interdiction program" enforcing the trade embargo.
- Aug 15* Iraq accedes to Iranian peace demands. Iran-Iraq war formally ends.
- Aug 16* U.S. naval forces in the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the Red Sea begin unilateral interdiction efforts.
- Aug 22* Bush issues executive order authorizing the call-up of the reserve components of the Armed Forces. (First time since the 1968 Tet offensive).
- Aug 25* UN Security Council Resolution 665 authorizes military action to halt all maritime trade with Iraq.
- Aug 28* Iraq declares Kuwait its 19th province.
- Sept 5* Secretary of State Baker tells Congress that the administration intends to maintain a long-term military presence in the gulf area even if Iraq agrees to withdraw from Kuwait, citing the need for greater stability in the region.
- Sept 10* Bush and Gorbachev issue joint pledge to act "individually and in concert" to reverse Iraq's conquest of Kuwait.
- Sept 25* UN Security Council resolution authorizes air embargo of Iraq.
- Sept 30* Pentagon releases cost of U.S. Gulf operations: \$2.7 billion for fiscal year 1990 (August 7-Sept 30). Projected \$15.5 billion for FY 1991.
- Oct 2* Senate approves resolution supporting deployment of U.S. military forces to the Gulf by a vote of 96 to 3.
- Oct 5* Washington Post reports the presence of more than 200,000 U.S. troops and approximately 100,000 allied European and Arab troops in the Gulf.

- 1987* On May 17, U.S. Frigate Stark struck by Iraqi missiles in Gulf; 37 sailors die.
- 1984* On March 5, the U.S. accuses Iraq of using lethal chemical weapons against Iran. Accusations are confirmed by the UN.
- 1982* On June 6, Israel invades Lebanon.
- 1981* Israel bombs Iraqi nuclear reactor.
- 1980* On September 4, Iraq declares war on Iran.
- 1979* Saddam Hussein assumes the presidency of Iraq.
- 1978* Camp David Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty signed.
- 1973* Iraq claims territorial right to the Kuwaiti islands of Warbah and Babiyan.
Iraqi troops occupy the border city of Samithan in Kuwait. Troops are withdrawn in 1974.
- 1963* Iraq formally recognizes Kuwait's independence.
- 1961* Kuwait gains independence from Britain. Iraq threatens invasion citing Ottoman sovereignty over the region. Britain sends combat troops.
- 1958* Revolution in Iraq. Monarchy is deposed. Iraq becomes a Republic.
- 1948* Israel declares independence.
- 1932* Iraq becomes independent under the protection of the British.
- 1918* British expeditionary forces seize the three Ottoman provinces (Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra) that comprise the modern state of Iraq.
- 1914* Turkey enters World War I on the side of the Central Powers.
Britain sends an expeditionary force to port of Basra in the Gulf to perform a "holding operation." The force's task was initially intended to protect British oil interests from Turkish aggression.
- 1534* Ottoman Turks conquer the present-day territories of Iraq in the Persian Empire.

— Prepared by Patrick M. Steel and Micah Fink

1990 Oil Prices

- July 1* Oil at \$18 a barrel.
- July 27* Oil prices raised by OPEC to \$21 a barrel.
- Aug 23* Oil hits \$31.03 a barrel. U.S. dollar hits a record low.
- Sept 26* Oil up to \$38.67 a barrel.
- Sept 28* Price of oil at a record high of \$39.54 a barrel.

CRISIS IN THE GULF

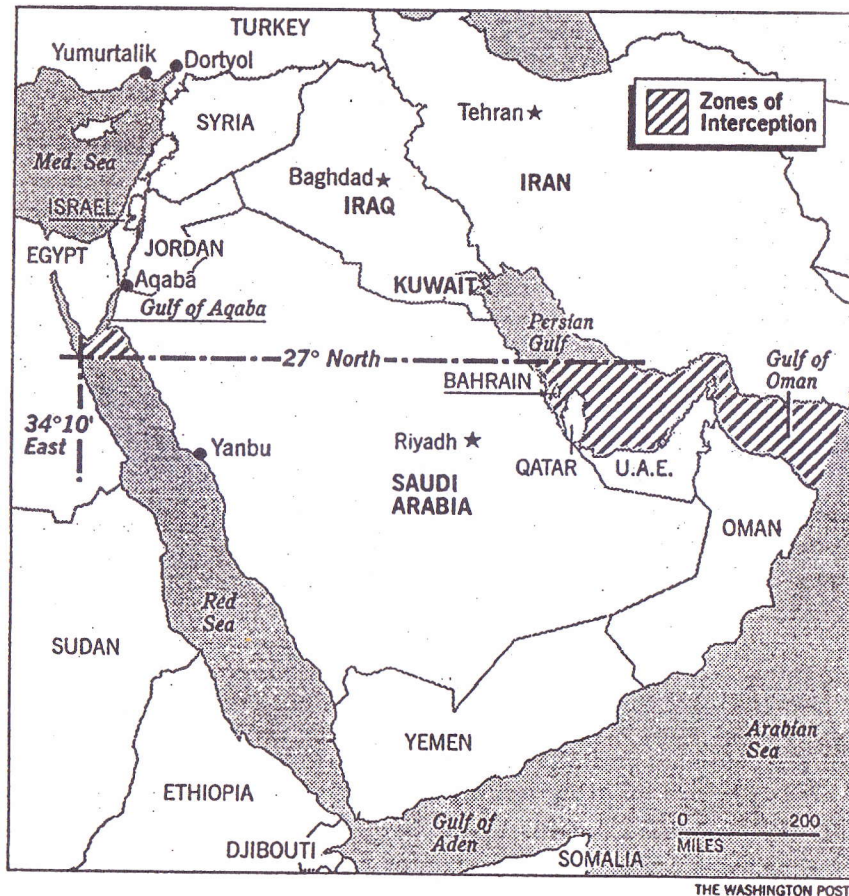
INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Policy Studies relates ideas to progressive change. Its public scholars develop fundamental inquiries and new insights on questions of public policy in an effort to inform and expand the parameters of public debate. We assist public interest and grass-roots organizations and members of Congress on request, linking scholars, activists and policymakers in the broader search for responsible and just policies at home and abroad.

Institute public scholars view the crisis in the Gulf as a test case for the application of reason and judgment to seemingly intractable problems. The Institute for Policy Studies Crisis Monitoring Group has prepared this four-part background booklet for citizens concerned with the complex and cross-cutting forces set in motion on August 2, 1990, when Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait. Intended as a tool for public education and informed action, this booklet addresses: 1) the difficult choices facing the U.S. in the Gulf crisis; 2) the regional and historical context of the conflict; 3) the longer-term implications for the U.S.; and 4) suggestions for citizen education and action.

The choices and actions of the United States in this crisis will determine the shape of the post-Cold War order. The exercise of multi-lateral diplomacy—and in particular, the legitimacy of the United Nations—is also being tested as an instrument for common security. The stakes are high: depending on the strategy followed, there will be tens of thousands dead and wounded if the goal is the destruction of Iraq as well as the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

History often presents difficult choices to people and nations. The Gulf crisis places very great responsibility on the American citizenry. We must be prepared to debate and consider the costs and consequences of war for the region, for our own nation and its real security, economic and democratic interests, and for the emerging world order. And we must be prepared with alternatives.



The ideas put forward here are intended to make clear that there are alternatives to war in the Gulf. It is articulated in part by citizens and leaders who seek to organize a series of comprehensive multi-lateral conferences under UN auspices. The conferences would provide a forum for discussion, debate and negotiated solution of the full range of Middle East conflicts, including arms control, recognition of Israel, the need for non-aggression pacts between all nations of the Middle East, the issue of an international oil reserve fund, and the need for the Syrians and Israelis to withdraw from Lebanon and the occupied territories.

In the final analysis, we as citizens must be prepared to challenge our leaders and ourselves to develop ideas which reflect an emerging world consensus against the war system as the means for resolving disputes among nations.

— Marcus G. Raskin, Co-Director, Institute for Policy Studies

HARD CHOICES

"If ever there was a time to put country before self and patriotism before party, that time is now." The members of the United States Congress rose to their feet when President Bush spoke these words in September.

But the issue is, what *is* best for the country. We have learned from painful experience that blindly following leaders, however dedicated, however eloquent, does not always serve the national interest. Leaders can be wrong, and sometimes they are. When they are wrong, millions of people pay the price for their mistakes. In a democracy, it is the patriotic responsibility of every citizen to ponder weighty national decisions, particularly those likely to settle the fate of an entire generation. The crisis in the Gulf is such a crisis.

The challenge we face is to choose the right course, the one that will not only resolve the crisis in the Persian Gulf but will also set the world on a course of greater stability, security, and peace.

When a nation is being prepared for war, its leaders will simplify the issues. And make no mistake, the people of the United States are being prepared for a war of one sort or another. As brutal and shocking as Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait was, the causes of the crisis are not simple. At stake are larger issues than the ruthless acts of one man, and these issues will remain, regardless of when or how Saddam Hussein leaves the stage.

What follows is a guide designed to help citizens evaluate and consider a range of alternative policies for resolving what President Bush has called the "first major crisis of the post-Cold War world." There are no easy choices. Risks, costs, and uncertainties lie behind every decision. In each case, the benefits of success must be weighed against the consequences of failure. The stakes are high, not only for the region, but for the U.S. and the emerging world order. The way the crisis is resolved will establish a new set of standards and principles

for international behavior, and will shape the character and role of the United States in the post-Cold War world.

THE WAITING GAME IN THE DESERT

The President's strategy is to confront Iraq with an American-organized blockade backed by the threat of increasing pressure.

The Bush administration has gone to great lengths to secure international endorsement for its actions. But the President is very clear about where the decisions are made. Within three days of the invasion of Kuwait, he reported to Congress "I decided to check that aggression." As a result of this personal decision of an American president, made without congressional consultation or public debate, more than 200,000 U.S. troops are camped under the boiling desert sun and in the surrounding waters. The principal users of Middle East oil, Germany and Japan, have sent no ground forces because they are barred by their own constitutions and legal restrictions from doing so. (Germany, now the most powerful economic force in Europe, is using the crisis to rid itself of such restrictions, a move that is not likely to add to stability in Europe.) The Arab states aligned with the United States have sent a token troop representation and promise more.

In the rush to resolve the Gulf Crisis, nothing is done to reverse the foolish and dangerous policies of oil dependence that brought a U.S. military force into the Arabian desert.

Saudi Arabia is demanding \$23 billion worth of arms—a good sale for the U.S. arms industry, but one certain to increase tensions in the region. To buy President Mubarak's support, the United States has forgiven \$7 billion in Egyptian debts. This substantial gift will be balanced with billions more in debt reduction for Israel. The direct costs of the preparations for a land war and the war already underway at sea—blockades are technically acts of war—have already surpassed \$1 million an hour.

All this will be counted a bargain if the operation succeeds. But there are compelling reasons that it cannot succeed.

■ First, the hastily-organized alliance against Saddam is shaky because its members have different interests and levels of commitment. Although they have promised financial contributions totalling about \$7 billion combined, neither Germany nor Japan has any intention of making its economy hostage to the crisis as the United States appears willing to do. As the crisis drags on, any one of the diverse array of U.S. allies could opt out or change course.

■ Second, Saddam may be able to play the waiting game better than the United States. The blockade is not completely effective and cannot be. Saddam forced the Iraqi people to suffer great hardships during the ten-year war with Iran. While the United States has successfully aligned the governments of the world against Iraq, Saddam's appeal to the Arab masses who cheer him on as one who has stood up to the U.S. is most likely more persuasive among his own people.

It is unlikely, therefore, that Saddam will bow to President Bush's demands any time soon, if ever. As the memory of his invasion recedes, the presence of the western military forces in the desert will increasingly become the focus of world attention.

■ The stalemate works against the United States. Consider the costs already incurred. Thousands of American soldiers are risking their lives daily under brutal conditions. The direct dollar cost is already high. The indirect energy costs are pushing the American economy into recession. Even more serious, the war with no end in sight has become the tail wagging American policy at home and abroad. The crisis is absorbing the attention of the President and his top advisers, and the United States is devoting little effort to shaping the new world order in the making.

In the rush to resolve the Gulf crisis, nothing is done to reverse the foolish and dangerous policies of oil dependence that brought a U.S. military force into the Arabian desert. Serious efforts to develop alternative fuel sources and to promote efficiency and conservation as Germany and Japan have done are not even proposed by the President. Instead, a gas-guzzling military force is assembled, and the crisis is

seized by the President as the rationale for such energy-wasteful efforts as the Strategic Defense Initiative, Stealth, Minuteman, and countless more nuclear weapons projects in a world in which the other nuclear superpower is no longer an enemy.

■ The urgent needs of the American people that dominated the front pages before the August invasion cannot be dismissed or deferred indefinitely. The "peace dividend" is a necessity, not a luxury. Saddam's actions in the Gulf do not change our domestic imperatives: we need an education system that works, a banking system that is not on the edge of bankruptcy, bridges that don't collapse, factories that can make products people want to buy. The United States needs to reinvest hundreds of billions of dollars in America, and the money is disappearing into the Gulf.

■ If the crisis drags on, the support for the waiting game in the desert will evaporate. Increasingly, more American citizens will call for withdrawal. But with each dollar spent and each presidential speech pledging total victory, this course will look more and more like surrender. And as the stakes are raised, the hawks calling for a war to "get it over with" are likely to outnumber the doves. Everything suggests that the time to shape a peaceful solution is running out. The choices are a negotiated settlement or a bloody war.

A WAR FOR PEACE IN THE GULF

The American people usually rally around their presidents in the call to war. Yet throughout our history, wars—particularly those that exact a high price in lives and dollars over time—have deeply divided the nation. The recent military interventions against Grenada, Libya, and Panama were supported by an overwhelming majority of citizens and then quickly forgotten. These were short wars, and the stated objectives were quickly achieved with a minimum loss of *American* lives. (Most Americans are unaware of the thousands of Panamanian lives lost in the December 1989 invasion.) But the war in the Gulf will not be short.

There are three basic scenarios for a Gulf war. The first is a "surgical" strike against Saddam's government and war machine,

including the plants that produce poison gas. The chief of the United States Air Force in the Gulf announced plans for a "decapitation" strike to kill Saddam, his family, and his mistress, and was sacked—not for spreading falsehoods but for telling classified truth. Some have suggested that this attack be carried out as "punishment," and that it be followed by the withdrawal of the American-organized expeditionary force from the Gulf. But what happens after the rain of destruction on Baghdad and other population centers is over?

Once having decimated Baghdad, the United States would effectively be locked into a permanent military presence in the Gulf. The largely American force would find itself facing a furious Arab population throughout the region. A hostile regime, headed by Saddam or others, would still be in charge in Iraq. None of the strategic objectives of the United States would be achieved by this act of frustration and revenge. Few Americans would be proud of what U.S. military forces had done in their name to the western hostages or to the children of Baghdad, and the horrors of war displayed on TV screens across the United States would once again divide the nation. The "surgical strike" scenario is therefore unrealistic.

A second scenario is much more plausible: devastating air attacks would prepare the way for an invasion of Kuwait and Iraq. Enough troops would be committed not only to push Saddam out of Kuwait, but eventually, to destroy his regime.

But the loss of lives, overwhelmingly American lives, would be fearful. The Pentagon's leaked estimates are 20,000 and such estimates are notoriously optimistic. No one knows to what level this conflict would escalate. Poison gas could be used, and the response could well be the use of tactical nuclear weapons. The world would then cross another divide on the road to full-scale nuclear war.

Even if the war against Saddam ends in a "victory"—achieved at the price of thousands of American lives and hundreds of billions of dollars to support the permanent forces that would then remain in the desert as occupation troops—this would be the beginning of hostilities, not the end. The revulsion Arab leaders may feel for Saddam Hussein would be overwhelmed by the fury that would greet mass destruction visited upon an Arab populace. Nothing less than all-out war would

be required in the physical effort to turn Iraq into a pro-American client state. To undertake a war against Saddam without pressing to achieve a total U.S. "victory" would be the height of folly; he would be a dangerous king to wound. Regardless of the outcome, the war would increase instability and disorder in the Gulf for years to come.

The third scenario no one talks about. Saddam strikes back by widening the war. He attacks Israel, seeking to turn the conflict into a holy war against the focus of rage in the region. The destruction of lives and hopes that would result is beyond our ability to imagine. We can be certain, however, that it would not usher in the new world order the President has described. To make a graveyard of the Middle East is not a step toward peace or security.

DIPLOMACY AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Diplomacy is about compromise and accommodation of conflicting interests. A negotiated solution is almost always a second-best solution from everybody's point of view. Whether a negotiated settlement is acceptable depends on the available alternatives. The realistic alternatives to an early negotiated settlement in the Gulf are morally and politically unacceptable. The rain of death on Baghdad would be seen throughout the world as the Fort Sumpter of a long civil war between the haves and have-nots of the globe.

Is a negotiated settlement possible? No one can say for sure. But unlike the military scenarios discussed above, there are only benefits, not risks, in trying. The United States can still take action to defuse this conflict and set the stage for a new and decent world order based on a genuine understanding of the conditions of peace. Three steps should be taken immediately.

■ *The United States should devote its principal efforts to multi-lateral diplomacy.* We should stop the buildup and step up our efforts to settle the conflict through negotiation. The immediate purpose of the military buildup has been achieved: the threat of an invasion of Saudi Arabia has been averted. Thus the United States and the allied nations should drop the demand for the restoration of Sheik Sabah to the throne of Kuwait.

The American people have no interest in tying their fortunes to the feudal Sabah regime, which bases its legitimacy on an "election" held in the mid-eighteenth century. Despite the concerns over regional aggression, the Arab people have not supported the idea of shedding blood to restore to power a rich, greedy royal family that has done little for the impoverished Arab masses. It is an unnecessary and dangerous war aim for the United States. This country is still reaping the bitter harvest of the CIA operation in 1953 that restored the Shah of Iran to the throne. As desirable as it would be for Saddam to disappear from the political scene, his departure would not assure peace.

For two generations the entire approach of the United States to establishing peace in the Middle East has stimulated war. Massive military support for authoritarian rulers deemed to be "stabilizers"—the Shah, Sadat, Saddam himself, and now Assad of Syria, a man whose hands are no less bloody than Saddam's—has fueled bloody war for years. This clumsy political intervention to create clients for oil-consuming nations is an endless process that has consistently backfired.

The guarantee of peace in the region is necessarily a collective, multi-lateral task. It is a United Nations responsibility, and with all its limitations, it has a better chance of achieving President Bush's stated objective than the doomed political strategies of the United States. The orderly creation of a genuinely multilateral force should begin immediately. In accordance with the detailed military provisions of the United Nations Charter, now endorsed by the Soviet Union, non-U.S. forces, principally from Arab nations, should be substituted for the bulk of American forces, and a non-American leader should take command. Egypt has offered 30,000 troops, but as yet most of them are nowhere to be seen. Other nations should be encouraged to send more. The sharing of sacrifice advertised by President Bush would be better symbolized by a genuinely international force sanctioned by the legal and moral authority of the United Nations. The test of whether the force is genuinely international is whether it is acting in accordance with the explicit provisions of the United Nations Charter and is committed to carrying out all UN resolutions.

Moreover, it is unconscionable that American men and women are bearing disproportionate risks for countries far more dependent on Persian Gulf oil than is the United States. This country is not serving

any legitimate interest by acting as a mercenary force for its primary commercial competitors who themselves refuse to match the United States in either money or their willingness to spill blood.

■ *The issue of Iraq's aggression should be placed in a wider context.* Iraq's annexation of Kuwait is not negotiable, but the timing and the terms of withdrawal should be negotiated within the framework of a larger set of issues. Specifically, the United States should seize this moment to move the deteriorating political situation in the Middle East toward a more just order. "Stability," the newly reaffirmed global goal of the United States, cannot be achieved at gunpoint. It rests on a legitimate political, legal, and moral order. Otherwise, stability is a mirage, just a slogan over which to fight wars.

The effort toward a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Gulf should be part of a renewed effort for a general settlement in the Middle East. Given the cooperation of the Soviet Union, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia in this crisis, the moment is at hand for such an undertaking. The alternative to a regional settlement is the crippling and dangerous militarization of the whole region—and permanent conflict.

Negotiations should be undertaken separately to deal with the major conflicts that have long destabilized the Middle East: a) the regional arms race; b) the equitable use of oil for the development of the region; c) the Arab-Israeli conflict and a just solution for the Palestinians as well as the Israelis.

Pressing now for a long-term political settlement that is in the interest of the United States, the other oil-consuming nations, and the people of the region must not be dismissed as a "reward" for Iraq's aggression. If Saddam wants to use negotiations as a face-saving way to back off, so much the better. The overriding goal is a stable peace in the region. If Saddam balks at negotiations premised on his withdrawal from Kuwait, then the two proposed courses recommended here—first, a serious attempt by the United States to find a peaceful solution and second, an immediate move to have non-Americans, principally Arab forces, play a significantly greater role in the collective military effort in the desert—will improve the chances that the alliance against Saddam will hold. The more the costs and risks can be shared, the less Saddam can count on the coalition breaking apart.

It is clearly in the interest of the United States and other nations to end the military threat posed by Iraq's huge army, its poison gas, and its nuclear ambitions. This can only be done on a permanent basis by enforceable agreements to reduce armies and ban weapons of mass destruction. Without progress in this direction, the Middle East will continue to be a time bomb. A disarming strike on military facilities is not a realistic solution; weapons of mass destruction are too easily available in today's world. If there is no political settlement, preventing a wounded Iraq from once again acquiring chemical and nuclear facilities would require permanent surveillance and a permanent occupying force. Given the end of the Cold War, negotiated disarmament in the Middle East is far less utopian than the illusion of a permanent military solution.

A just and stable settlement is achievable if: a) progress can be made in settling the issues dividing Israel and its neighbors; and b) the nuclear superpowers reduce their stockpiles, stop claiming that nuclear weapons are legitimate instruments of war or diplomacy and announce that they will produce no more of them.

A serious diplomatic effort toward these ends would obviously be an enormous and difficult undertaking, but no more difficult than the alternative—permanent mobilization and periodic wars in the Gulf. If successful, a regional disarmament and development program within the context of deep reductions by the nuclear powers would have an historic payoff. It would usher in a new era in human affairs built on the fundamental recognition that in the twenty-first century no legitimate national interest can be served by war.

■ *The United States should take immediate steps to refit its economy, life-styles, and worldview to the realities of the twenty-first century.* Efficiency, conservation, and the development of an alternative energy base are absolutely essential for the survival of democracy in the United States, for a workable economy, and for peace. The moral bankruptcy of waging war for oil should be clear to all. The impracticality of basing a gas-guzzling culture on a permanent war economy will become apparent. Oil extracted by force is never cheap. Oil addiction leads not only to environmental destruction, but, eventually, to a bankrupt economy.

The U.S. must finally examine and address the roots of its oil addiction, and begin to change old habits. The necessary first steps are clear: they have been detailed by energy conservation groups and successfully implemented by such allies and economic competitors as Germany and Japan. The time to begin is now.

— Richard J. Barnet, Co-Director, Institute for Policy Studies

BEHIND THE GULF CRISIS: A HISTORY OF CONFLICT

On August 2, 1990, Iraq's President Saddam Hussein ordered an invasion of Kuwait. By mid-October more than 200,000 U.S. troops find themselves on combat duty in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. In ordering the most extensive and expensive intervention since World War II, President Bush informed the public that U.S. military power must be used in the defense of Saudi Arabia and possibly to attack Iraq. President Bush followed his dispatch of troops to the region with a call to the United Nations to respond to Iraq's aggression. The UN passed a series of resolutions condemning Iraq and imposing severe sanctions, backed by a multilateral force.

Over the course of two months the crisis escalated: Iraq holds foreign hostages from several countries, threatens to destroy oil supplies and use terrible weapons. Counter-threats have ensued from the United States and England. Troops from several nations are deployed alongside the American forces, although no unified command exists.

To understand the Persian Gulf on the eve of war in October 1990, it is helpful to know something about the history of conflict in the region and the struggles of Arab peoples against western imperialism.

THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM AND THE IRAQ-KUWAIT QUARREL

Out of the centuries of migrations in search of water and trading locations, mainly from the Najd region in what is today northern Saudi Arabia, a group of tribes settled in Kuwait in the early 1700s. By the end of that century the Sabahs had emerged as the leading political family. Their dominion endured until the Iraqi invasion last August.

Through the nineteenth century, trade and pearl-diving dominated Kuwait's economy. The small merchant elite, linked to but independent of the royal family, managed the labor force and national revenues. The major social cleavages divided the wealthy and the less privileged, and the majority Sunni and minority Shi'a. There were also differences between Kuwait's townspeople and nomadic tribal families.

European—and particularly British—intrusion changed Gulf history and boundaries, beginning in the sixteenth century. The English Crown's strategy to colonize India led British forces to carry out sub-colonial expeditions throughout the area, primarily to counter rival imperial forces. In 1899, Britain secured an agreement with Mubarak, the leading Sabah sheikh. In return for a small sum of money, the Sabahs agreed not to cede, lease or sell territory without British consent.

Until after World War I, the territory that comprises Iraq and Kuwait was formally under the control of the Ottoman empire. The British exploited Ottoman weakness at the time, and used their position in the Gulf as part of a strategic rivalry with Germany and Russia. The Sabahs saw the opportunity to use British power to counter-balance the Ottomans on the one hand and the aggressive expansion of the al-Sauds in the Arabian peninsula on the other.

British control of Kuwait, in the form of a protectorate, continued into the mid-1920s, while the former Ottoman provinces of Baghdad and Basra became the League of Nations mandate territory of Iraq, with Britain as the mandatory power. During this period, Ibn Saud consolidated his family's control over most of the Arabian Peninsula. In 1922, Britain's steward in the Gulf, Sir Percy Cox, unilaterally established the boundaries of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, placing a large piece of the Najd within Iraq and compensating Ibn Saud with a sizable piece of what Kuwaitis considered their territory. Sir Percy's map also left Iraq without secure access to the Gulf.

Although Iraq became formally independent in 1932, the British effectively controlled the country until the nationalist revolution of July 1958. In the late 1930s, the Iraqi monarchy unsuccessfully campaigned to have Kuwait "restored" to Baghdad. When Kuwait became formally independent in June 1961, Iraq's nationalist leader Abd al-Karim

Qassim renewed the Iraqi claim to Kuwaiti territory. Britain, worried about possible instability in the oil region, responded to his claim with alarm by dispatching troops, which were quickly replaced by an Arab League peace keeping force. In October 1963, Iraq recognized Kuwaiti independence.

KUWAIT

The Kuwaiti ruling family's wealth increased exponentially in the 1950s as gushers of oil turned into money. The Emir and his family favored those possessing Kuwaiti citizenship; others became "guest" residents. Citizenship was bestowed on those families that had resided in Kuwait since 1920; only fifty outsiders a year could become naturalized citizens. Non-citizens were subject to deportation during periods of economic downturn or political instability. While non-citizens had no political rights, in 1990 Kuwaiti citizens enjoyed few themselves. Only male citizens over 21 were eligible to vote, representing roughly 3.5 percent of the population.

Kuwait's last parliament was elected in 1985, but was abolished by the Emir in 1986. During the 1980s the ruling royalty reversed an earlier trend toward opening the political system—including cabinet seats and other high posts—to Kuwaitis not related to the Sabah family. In the spring of 1990, Kuwaiti opposition forces launched militant demonstrations demanding elections and reconstitution of the parliament. The ruling elite made insignificant concessions, and then turned on the opposition leaders and arrested them.

What are our interests in the region? Are they vital? Are U.S. actions in the Gulf serving our interests? Whom are we protecting and why?

Although the ruling family extended medical and some education benefits to non-citizens in the mid-1960s, the social and economic gap between Kuwaitis and non-citizens remained profound. Only citizens were eligible to participate in the various revenue distribution schemes.

Even those non-citizens who had become prosperous and spent most of their lives in Kuwait could not own property; fifty-one percent of any company had to be Kuwaiti-owned. Non-citizens earned only a fraction of the earnings of Kuwaitis. Kuwait imported other Arabs—especially Palestinians—and people from the Indian subcontinent to perform physical labor as well as essential technical and professional work. By the 1980s, non-citizens comprised about two-thirds of the population, and about eighty percent of the work force.

Kuwait's position as a small, somewhat vulnerable independent state required the deft diplomatic skills for which the Sabahs were renowned. They did not attempt to convert the bulk of their wealth into development capital for the region, which could have translated into significant power. Instead, they invested most of it in the west; small loans or grants financed development projects in other Arab countries; and another token sum went to show solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Their financial disbursements to other Arab states have frequently amounted to a form of "protection money," beginning with the 1961 payments to Egypt to secure support against Iraq's territorial claims. A puzzling question surrounding the present crisis is why Kuwait's rulers did not try to accommodate Baghdad's financial demands.

IRAQ

Approximately the size of California, Iraq was largely a rural society until the last few decades. Oil brought dramatic transformations. The disruption of Iraqi society was expressed most graphically in the tremendous movement of impoverished peasants from the countryside to urban shantytowns, where they comprised the shock troops for nationalist and Communist forces competing to overthrow the British-installed monarchy.

Iraq's political revolution in 1958 anticipated the revolution in Iran twenty years later. Land and wealth were extremely concentrated, with development projects and government expenditures financed by oil revenues benefiting the wealthy few.

July 1958 marked the first U.S. military intervention in response to developments in Iraq. President Eisenhower sent Marines to Lebanon,

in part to shore up the tottering Lebanese regime against growing nationalist sentiments in Iraq as well as Egypt and Syria. Eisenhower made it clear that the troop presence was also to set the stage for deployment in Iraq itself, should counter-revolutionary intervention seem feasible.

A decade of instability followed the revolution, as different forces contended for state power. This was accompanied by a shift in the distribution of income, from large landowners and merchants to the salaried middle class, and to a lesser degree, to wage earners and small farmers. The Ba'th Party, which seized power in July 1968, embodied a relatively homogeneous faction of the lower middle class who were the primary beneficiaries of the 1958 revolution—sons of small shopkeepers, petty officials, and the graduates of teacher training schools, the law school and the military academies.

As in Kuwait, oil revenues financed the growth of the state. Because of its considerably larger population and territory, and the many social, ethnic and sectarian cleavages in Iraqi society, the repressive as well as the distributive organs of the state were highly developed. By the mid-1970s, the government became by far the largest employer. The Ministry of Interior alone, with its security and intelligence functions, employed 137,000 people, as many persons as all large private and public manufacturing firms combined.

Saddam Hussein is the sole survivor among those who seized power in 1968. Vice-president until 1979, he took over the top post when Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr resigned that year. All other political forces besides the Ba'th, notably the Communist Party, the Kurdish Democratic Party and the (Shi'i) Dawa Party, have been crushed, and political rivals within the Ba'th eliminated. Much of the cohesion of Saddam's regime results from the fact that most key officials come from the region of Takrit, Saddam's home town northwest of Baghdad; and many are kin.

Saddam has had ample experience in foreign aggression. In September 1980 he ordered Iraqi forces to invade Iran. Saddam intended to overthrow the new Islamic Republic in Teheran and establish Iraq's position as the paramount power in the Gulf. Unlike his 1990 invasion, his offensive against Iran had the tacit support of the United States.

Saddam's military assault quickly bogged down, however, and by March 1982 Iraq found itself on the defensive. The possibility of an Iranian victory provoked the formation of an unusual regional and international alliance, all of whose members shared the common goal of preventing Iraq's collapse. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia provided massive financing; France and the Soviet Union supplied the largest quantity of arms; Egypt and Jordan also provided weapons and military advisers. The United States guaranteed credits, some "non-military" aircraft, and considerable political support. Kuwait's request for U.S. protection against Iranian attacks on its oil tankers provided the rationale for U.S. naval intervention in the Persian Gulf in 1987 and 1988. Washington led the effort in the UN Security Council to produce a ceasefire resolution tailored to Iraq's needs.

Iran accepted the ceasefire in August 1988, two weeks after the USS Vincennes shot down an IranAir civilian plane, killing all 290 persons aboard. After the ceasefire, Saddam launched a military offensive against Iraq's Kurdish population. Unable to defeat the Iranian army, he could claim victory against a minority population that opposed his rule. Using chemical weapons (as they had against Iran), Iraqi forces drove tens of thousands of Kurdish civilians across the border into Turkey.

THE IRAQI CLAIM

Iraq had pressed for long-term access to two Kuwait-controlled Gulf Islands, Bubiyan and Warba, since the 1930s. By the 1970s Baghdad had planned a major expansion of its oil production and export capacity and wanted to modernize the port of Umm Qasr as an alternative to the Shatt al-Arab exit to the Gulf which it shared with its major adversary, Iran. The Emir of Kuwait was reluctant to yield on any territorial claims.

Then came the war with Iran, which Kuwait helped to finance. Iraq demanded that Kuwait lease the two uninhabited islands. Kuwait rejected the request, but agreed to allow Iraq to set up artillery observation posts on Warba during strategic battles in 1986 and 1988. Kuwait also provided Iraq with access to its major port once Basra was shut down by the fighting.

Following the August 1988 ceasefire, Iraq once again stepped up efforts to improve port facilities at Umm Qasr, at the mouth of the Gulf. Territorial disputes continued and in the period leading up to the August 1990 invasion, Iraq reportedly declined Kuwaiti efforts to ratify the existing borders between the two countries.

When Iraq renewed its demands on Kuwait for more secure access to the Gulf in 1990, the Gulf outlet issue was tied to a larger set of economic grievances against Kuwait—including repayment of the wartime debt, Kuwait's alleged pumping from an oil field that crosses beneath the two countries' border, and Kuwait's excess oil production, which led to weak international prices and falling revenues. Iraq's complaints about Kuwaiti overproduction sounded familiar and plausible in a region where people retain an acute memory of the manipulative role of western companies and governments, often secured with the eager compliance of local regimes.

OIL AND THE LEGACY OF IMPERIALISM

Many of the political arrangements that determined borders and the characters of ruling families have endured because of the western industrialized countries' stake in oil.

The discovery and initial production of oil in the region predates World War II, but the Gulf states did not emerge as a major producer until after the war.

The seven major American and European oil companies (the "Seven Sisters") that dominated the industry gained exclusive control of Middle East oil. The appeal of Middle East oil lay in its low production costs—between five and fifteen cents a barrel. The world market price was set by these major companies on the basis of higher production costs in the United States and elsewhere. The result was bonanza profits for the oil giants in the Middle East.

The emergence of this region as a major oil producer coincided with two critical political transitions: the rise of nationalist movements and the end of direct European colonial control, and the eclipse of British and French power in the region by the United States.

The first major nationalist challenge to Western control was the decision of Iran's parliament to nationalize British Petroleum's interests in 1951. The west responded with an embargo on Iranian oil, which helped set the stage for the 1953 CIA-led coup that restored the shah to power.

British and U.S. oil companies used Iraqi and Kuwaiti production to replace Iranian supplies during the boycott. A decade later, when Iraq was leading the nationalist challenge to western control, the companies turned to Iran and Kuwait to supply their markets, punishing Iraq by keeping production—and hence revenues—low. Kuwait's role in both instances was to fill gaps in supply. Between 1952 and 1960, Kuwait, with a population of around half a million, was the largest single oil-producing state in the Middle East.

THE CONTEXT FOR WAR

In 1990 Saddam Hussein saw an opportunity to resolve some of the devastating economic consequences of the war against Iran while at the same time forcefully claiming Iraq's place as the pre-eminent state in the Gulf region. Saddam had no interest in upsetting the prevailing Arab political order as long as its interests coincided with his. Once this convergence of interests no longer held—and this is the significance of Kuwait's stubborn refusal to negotiate Iraq's demands—Baghdad acted on its own.

It is improbable that Iraq intended its aggression to represent a fundamental challenge to the established order. Saddam evidently did not anticipate the regional and international alliance now aligned against him. What surprised the international community, however, was the extent of popular support Saddam has tapped in the Arab world.

The manifestations of support in a number of Arab countries signifies less an endorsement of the belligerent Saddam Hussein and his regime than support for a serious challenge to a political order widely regarded as illegitimate. Ambivalence about and even opposition to Saddam Hussein takes a clear second place to unambiguous hostility against the Gulf state system. The handful of ruling families

who monopolize the region's resources stand in stark contrast to the millions of Arabs who live impoverished.

In addition, the Arab world is the one region since World War II that has undergone colonization—specifically in the case of Palestine. The Palestinian issue literally spilled into the Gulf and Middle East states with the exodus of refugees, first in 1947 and 1948 and again after 1967. Palestinians make up significant percentages of the populations of most of the oil-rich sheikdoms and emirates. Saddam, to shore up Arab popular support in the face of the international condemnation of his invasion, took advantage of Palestinian and broader Arab resentment of the U.S. failure to bring about a negotiated solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The fact that the challenge to the prevailing economic and political order has come from a populist despot rather than from the forces of the left makes the political equation difficult for many in the west to assess.

The key questions remain for the people of the United States: What are our interests in the region? Are they vital? Are U.S. actions in the Gulf serving our interests? Whom are we protecting and why? These questions should be answered before we become involved in a possibly long and disastrous war. Members of both Houses of Congress and the President, as well as U.S. citizens, must be aware of the complex and historic web of Gulf and Middle East conflicts—many independent of the United States—into which our nation is about to step.

— Joe Stork, Editor, *Middle East Report*
Saul Landau, Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies
Fred Lawson also contributed to this text.

Middle East Report has produced a resource packet on the Gulf crisis. To obtain one, write to: MERIP, Suite 119, 1500 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20001.

THE GULF CRISIS: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S.

In the life of a nation," President Bush declared on August 8 as the first U.S. troops were arriving in the deserts of Saudi Arabia, "we're called upon to define who we are and what we believe." For the President and the nation, the crisis in the Gulf is a "defining moment." Whatever the outcome of the perilous face-off in the desert, the commitments and decisions made during the next months will say most about the future of the United States. It is vital that public debate begin now, for in every major area in which the Bush administration has revealed its longer-term priorities—its definition of the U.S. role in the world, its priorities for the national budget, its choice of energy policy—the administration's choices suggest a recipe for economic and social decline in the United States.

THE U.S. IN THE WORLD: DEMOCRATIC EXAMPLE OR GLOBAL POLICEMAN

The crisis in the Gulf has provided President Bush with the opportunity to provide the "vision thing," his view of the U.S. role in the post-Cold War world. With the collapse of the Soviet threat, a debate has begun among strategists and elites in Washington about the new U.S. role. Two major courses have been defined. Some argue that the United States must focus its priorities at home, reducing military spending dramatically to invest in revitalizing our economy, and insuring that the country will be able to compete in the new global marketplace. Others argue the strength of the U.S. lies in its military prowess, which we must use to police "instability" around the world.

The administration's statements on the Gulf crisis do not coincide with its actions, confusing the nature of the choice. On the one hand, the President has waxed eloquent on international law, on collective

action against aggression, on the United Nations support for an international embargo designed to isolate Saddam Hussein.

On the other hand, the President has unilaterally "drawn a line in the sand," sending over 200,000 U.S. troops to the Middle East and offering arms sales of tens of billions to the region, while dispatching the Secretaries of State and Treasury around the world to solicit contributions from allies openly reluctant to pay for a unilateral U.S. policy.

In drawing lessons from the crisis, the President and the Secretary of State have repeatedly emphasized the need for the U.S. to lead in policing the globe. "Recent events have surely proven that there is no substitute for American leadership," the President boasted to a joint session of Congress. "We remain," the Secretary of State informed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "the one nation that has the necessary political, military and economic instruments at our disposal" to drive efforts to curb international lawlessness. Even with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet threat, the "world remains a dangerous place," President Bush informed an elite audience at Aspen, Colorado, and we need forces "that will give us a global reach." How do we prove our credibility and reliability? The answer, according to Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, "is that we're willing to put troops on the ground....Americans are willing to risk their lives to insure the security of our friends and allies."

These statements reveal the administration's priorities for our future. The administration clearly assumes that the U.S. must police "instability" in a dangerous world. Secretary Baker may be correct in asserting that the U.S. is the sole remaining superpower, yet this role, as defined by the administration, may be less a contribution than a threat to our future prosperity.

For forty-five years, the United States carried the burdens of global containment, while maintaining a prosperous economy. In the years following World War II, the U.S. global role—from the Marshall Plan to the dispersion of troops and bases across the globe—contributed to economic growth. We provided the dollars to a devastated Europe and Japan that allowed them to import U.S. goods, fueling production and employment at home.

The end of the Cold War, however, finds the U.S. economy in far different straits. Europe and Japan have recovered and become economic competitors. The U.S., weighed down by massive military expenditures, has not made the public investments which all agree are vital to sustain a competitive economy: in education, in modern infrastructure and communications, in cleaning up the environment. Military investments abroad only worsen our position as the world's largest debtor, raising interest rates and undermining economic growth at home. Moreover, our public insolvency—so embarrassingly revealed in the official begging for support in the Gulf—makes sustaining a global military even more costly.

The temptation to act alone across the globe is a recipe for decline. Our objective must be to use our power and influence to give birth to a new multilateral, international system of peacekeeping.

Here the mistakes made by Great Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century are instructive. As the world's dominant economic and military power, Britain continued to invest in its global empire, ignoring the growth of economic competitors in the United States and Germany. British investment in domestic industry was limited by the desire for profits and adventure in colonies abroad. Although the British elite lived well off the returns from investments abroad, the British economy grew less and less able to compete. Today, Britain suffers a standard of living lower than most of its European neighbors.

For years, the U.S. preoccupation with fighting communism abroad enabled Japan and Germany to make dramatic economic gains without bearing similar burdens. Now these two countries are out-producing us. The current temptation to prove our worth by emphasizing our military role in the Gulf may prove equally self-defeating. For example, the U.S. is protecting the free flow of oil, over two-thirds of which goes to Japan and Europe. The returns on this policy are tallied each day in closing U.S. factories and bankrupt cities.

In the years ahead, it is vital that we give America's economic revival the same priority we once accorded the containment of communism. Unless we can restore our economic competitiveness, we will be constrained by foreign creditors and undermined by foreign competitors. To avert this fate, we must change priorities and begin to

invest in real security needs—to revitalize our economy, to rebuild our education system, and to clean up our environment.

Yet the Bush administration, rather than providing a “fair share” of resources for a multilateral response to aggression, has dispatched forces and weapons to the Gulf unilaterally, and then pursued rich allies for support. Instead of using an embargo to seek a negotiated solution, Mr. Bush offered another agenda: not negotiations but a “permanent presence” in the Gulf, so that the U.S. may end up the target of Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism. Instead of using the end of the Cold War as an opportunity to reinvest in America, the administration is outlining a global military posture that will continue to consume precious resources.

U.S. BUDGETARY PRIORITIES

The administration reflects its choices about the U.S. role in its budget priorities. The President and Defense Secretary have used the crisis in Iraq to breathe new life into the administration’s campaign against the peace dividend.

From the first weeks of the Gulf crisis, the President has used the conflict to step up his campaign to defend the military budget. He left his vacation in Kennebunkport to tell a national convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, “I will oppose the defense budget slashers who are out of tune with what America needs to keep freedom secure and safe.”

During the Cold War, over one-half of the estimated \$300 billion the U.S. currently spends annually on the military went to defend Europe from the Soviet threat. The end of the Cold War could free up fifty percent or more of the U.S. military budget for investment in rebuilding America. The administration is choosing a different path.

Before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Defense Department planners had detailed a five-year spending program for the military. The plan called for sustaining seventy-five percent of the uniformed forces and ninety percent of the military spending committed at the height of the Reagan Cold War buildup. The five-year plan would allow for only

minor real cuts—at a slower rate than those imposed over the last years of the Reagan administration.

Part of this disproportionate spending is devoted to building a new generation of strategic nuclear weapons. While the crisis in the Gulf should pose no nuclear threat, the President has used the crisis as a pretext to demand support for more nuclear weapons: one “lesson” of the crisis, the President informed the Veterans of Foreign Wars, is that we must give “the military the tools to do its job—the Peacemaker [the MX missile on rails], the Midgetman, the B-2 [the Stealth bomber at \$800 million a plane], the Strategic Defense Initiative.”

The President’s attempt to use the Gulf crisis to justify the production of a new generation of nuclear weapons and a massive investment in global intervention is disingenuous. The United States can maintain the strongest military in the world and still save \$500 billion or more from the President’s budget projections for the decade. There is a peace dividend at the end of the Cold War—the President, however, wants to spend it on the military.

Powerful domestic and international interests lobby for continued military spending. Our allies prefer that we carry the burden. The military-industrial complex that Eisenhower warned us about lobbies in congressional districts across the country: over 136 are said to be “significantly impacted” by military spending. But the future health and vitality of the people and the economy of the country require a change in priorities.

Economists across the political spectrum—from the corporate Conference Board to the AFL-CIO—are calling for new public investment to make our economy competitive. Public investments are vital if we are to educate our children, clean up our environment, rebuild our infrastructure and retrain our workers. Two-thirds of the federal research budget goes to the military, starving funds for exploration of alternative energy sources and efficient modes of production.

The pressing domestic needs grow ever more imperative. Yet if there is no significant peace dividend—if the end of the Cold War does not allow us to join the Soviet Union (and our European allies) and make substantial cuts in the military budget—there will be no funds to

reinvest in America, and little hope that this economy can find a new competitive position in the global marketplace.

ENERGY POLICY OR OIL DEPENDENCY

The misplaced priorities of the administration are perhaps clearest in energy policy. The President has stated that "our way of life" is at stake in the Gulf crisis. Secretary of State Baker has stated that the U.S. needs a "permanent presence" in the Gulf—that we must defend with American lives if necessary—a "durable order" and the "free flow of oil." But this commitment mistakes both the strategic and economic stakes in the Gulf and ignores our real security energy concerns.

Strategically, the administration is headed toward a commitment to the security of the handful of Arab families that control more than thirty-four percent of the world's energy reserves. These feudal emirates are creations of clever British and French imperial design after World War I. They were carved out to ensure that the west could continue to determine the flow of oil from the region. These extraordinarily wealthy feudal estates repay the west by investing their profits not in the development of Arab people but in the west.

One does not have to accept Saddam Hussein's virulent rhetoric to understand that these feudal regimes are literally built on sand in a region of increasing inequality and desperation, swept by the gales of nationalism and fundamentalism. For the United States to base its energy policy on the stability of the emirates is a blueprint for continued conflict, acts of terrorism, and regional upheaval that could well take the lives of Americans, consume our resources and still not guarantee a stable flow of oil.

Economically, the commitment is already costly. In this conservative Republican administration, once the national security managers take over, common sense about market economies goes out the window. In the modern world economy, oil-producing nations will seek to maximize prices—regardless of who rules them. The price of oil will no doubt rise over time, as known reserves decline. But as the OPEC nations learned in the 1970s, oil demand and oil reserves are a function

of price. If the price rises, conservation and alternative energy sources will lower the demand for oil.

Thus the ability of Saddam Hussein or any other Arab leader to control global oil prices for any period of time must be severely questioned. Any leader (or consortium) with hegemony in the Persian Gulf could control about half of the world's "reserves." But this statistic is highly misleading. "Reserves" are counted only if they can be produced profitably at current prices. If the price rises, or if technology lowers the costs of production, reserves expand. For example, proven crude reserves in 1985 totalled 700 billion barrels. Five years and roughly 100 million barrels of production later, proven reserves have expanded to one trillion barrels. A combination of new discoveries, price increases, and technological advances has increased by 400 billion barrels the oil considered to be economically recoverable.

Public debate about these choices cannot wait for the conflict to be resolved—debate must begin now.

In the crisis, the President has scarcely mentioned conservation. At his major Kennebunkport press conference, the President made his views clear:

- Q: We haven't really heard you call upon Americans to conserve as part of this crisis.
A: I call upon Americans to conserve.
Q: Will you elaborate?
A: No.

The Japanese—totally dependent upon imported energy—reacted to the oil crises of the 1970s by diversifying their energy sources and investing in energy efficiency. The government did not harass its citizens about their consumption habits. It focused instead on the largest corporations, insisting that they become more energy efficient. As a result, Japan is three times more efficient in the use of energy than the U.S., and its companies have a significant competitive advantage in production.

For ten years, Presidents Reagan and Bush have failed to create even the semblance of a coherent energy policy. As a result, progress

on conservation and efficiency froze in the mid-1980s. Research on renewable energy sources was cut to the bone. Reliance on imported oil increased. Rather than diversifying oil imports, the administration allowed dependency on oil from Arab OPEC members to rise from 8.5% of imports in 1985 to 26.6 % in 1989; from 2.7 % of oil consumption to 11.5% in 1989, the highest level since 1980. If America's economy is vulnerable to events in the Gulf, it is because the last ten years of neglect have made it so.

Ironically, the cost of conservation, efficiency, and alternative fuels is far less than the administration proposes to pay to protect oil from the Gulf. Before the crisis—which Senator Sam Nunn estimated would cost up to \$50 billion per year without a war—the administration was spending \$40 to \$45 billion per year on military forces dedicated to “gulf contingencies,” \$6 to \$7 billion in aid to Israel, Egypt and Pakistan, and in 1989, \$13.3 billion in oil imports from the Middle East. The real cost of oil in 1989—before the price hikes and the costs of Operation Desert Shield—was not the \$17.50 per barrel charged by OPEC, but nearly \$80 per barrel. This expense, moreover, is not shared by our allies and economic competitors, who enjoy oil imports at the market price, without the military tax.

Furthermore, the reality of global warming means that alternative fuels, renewable energy sources, and new forms of production are vital for the survival of mankind. Our real security would surely be better served by investing in conservation and renewable energy, rather than committing billions in what may be a futile attempt to secure feudal sheikdoms halfway across the globe. If we invest our resources in the Gulf while our competitors invest theirs in alternative energy sources, we are likely to find ourselves—even if successful in sustaining the sheiks—burdened with an uncompetitive, increasingly unsustainable industrial base.

REPUBLIC OR IMPERIAL EXECUTIVE

George Bush has asserted throughout the course of the Gulf crisis that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait “threatens our way of life.” Although the President has not defined exactly what “our way of life” is, his response to Iraq's aggression demonstrates his administration's

proclivity for secrecy and executive management of the crisis, raising crucial questions for our democracy.

The intervention in Saudi Arabia is the largest deployment of U.S. military forces into a combat zone since Vietnam. When Iraq illegally invaded Kuwait, no U.S. lives were at risk. The U.S. had no defense treaty with Kuwait. Indeed, the administration had informed Saddam Hussein prior to the invasion that it had no interest in his dispute with Kuwait. Yet, this extraordinary commitment was made without the advice and consent of Congress.

The President acted on his own authority. Since the deployment, the administration has stated that it will not be bound by the limits of the War Powers Act, which requires the President to withdraw U.S. forces sixty days after deploying them unless Congress votes otherwise. Apparently, presidential assertions that “hostilities are not imminent” and private briefings at the White House are sufficient for a Congress whose members are scrambling to produce a watered-down version of the War Powers Act. The administration will not seek a declaration of war before moving on Iraq. The President is committed to asserting an imperial executive's prerogative to act unilaterally across the globe.

Swept up by the passion of the crisis, Congress has deferred to the President. But surely Watergate and Iran-Contra have taught us the dangers of an executive that invokes “national security” to avoid the checks and balances of our constitutional system. If the President is correct and the U.S. response to the Middle East crisis will set “precedents” for the future, then the first casualty of the crisis may be the constitutional restraints vital to “our way of life” for over two centuries.

Long after the sands have erased all trace of U.S. troops from the Saudi desert, American priorities and possibilities will bear the imprint of choices made in the midst of the crisis. Public debate about these choices cannot wait for the conflict to be resolved—public debate must begin now.

— Robert L. Borosage, *Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies*
Andrew Leff, *Research Associate, Institute for Policy Studies*

CITIZEN DELIBERATION AND ACTION

One of the most important forms of citizen action is education through discussion and debate. Gather your neighbors and friends to talk about the Gulf crisis: how it started; what the broader issues are; what shape we want our foreign and national security policy to take in the post-Cold War era. Can we confront the world's problems through multi-national institutions? Should our national security apparatus, designed to further the Cold War aims of the past, be transformed and dismantled?

Consider possibilities for future discussion and action in your local citizens' group or voluntary organization. The following are a few suggestions for action:

1. Begin a "no surprises" telegram campaign to the White House, making it clear that there must be no military action on the part of the United States while Congress is out of session, and/or without an explicit congressional declaration of war. Send this message as well to your congressional representatives, requesting that they also send letters or telegrams to the White House. Ask to see a copy of their letters or telegrams.

2. Write to Secretary of State Baker asking him to make public the short and long-term U.S. plans for the Middle East and Gulf region. Do we intend to keep troops there, and for how long? What are the anticipated costs of that enterprise? Have several friends sign the letter or coordinate sign-ons by civic and religious leaders in your community.

3. Support UN non-military responses to the Iraqi invasion, including mandatory sanctions against Iraq. Ask your congressional representatives to require that the Department of State establish a special food, medicines, and airlift fund for refugees in the region, to be matched with contributions from other nations.

4. Take up the question of unilateral military intervention with your political party and prepare a state and local resolution along the lines

you believe are correct. Make the resolution public through newspapers and the media.

5. Form a teach-in committee to bring together a broad cross-section of your community to debate and consider the best ways to ensure peace in the Middle East.

6. Get local and city councils and state legislatures to speak out and pass resolutions, a) to demand the immediate return of hostages and withdrawal from Kuwait. These resolutions could praise UN 660 and UN 664 which call for the immediate withdrawal from Kuwait and the release of hostages. Send a message or fax to Iraq's Ambassador to the United States: His Excellency Mohamed al-Maskat, Embassy of Iraq, 1801 P Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; b) to require that the peace dividend be applied to rebuilding the United States; c) to urge that the U.S. work through the UN and abide by the collective judgment of the world's citizens.

7. Condemn anti-Arab discriminatory comments by public officials, the media, and in private conversation, making it clear that these undermine the settlement of disputes here and abroad. For more information, contact the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 4201 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C., 20008, (202) 244-2990.

8. Ask your local radio and TV stations to conduct a public opinion poll on unilateral military intervention and the proper shape of a Middle East and Gulf region settlement. Suggest questions you think useful to ask your fellow citizens. Assure that the results of the poll are widely disseminated.

9. Gather your own packet of educational materials and write letters to your local newspaper. Begin an open "chain letter" to gather signatures supporting the UN, opposing military intervention, calling for the hostages' release and Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. Report the existence of the chain letter to your local newspaper and TV station.

10. Bring together experts from your area to discuss a new energy policy. Have them prepare a set of recommendations for debate among your fellow citizens. Send the results to your representatives.

11. Speak to your congressional representatives, individually or as part of a delegation, about the congressional resolution supporting the President's actions, making it clear that you do not see the resolution as a carte blanche for executive action. Register this view with General Colin Powell, Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia.

12. Send for a videotape of a forum on the Gulf crisis, held in Washington, D.C., which included Members of Congress and representatives from the Institute for Policy Studies and the Center for Defense Information. It may be used as the basis for a discussion in your neighborhood or by your community's schools, social and religious groups. It is available from: Institute for Policy Studies, 1601 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 234-9382. (See below).

13. If you are a teacher or a union member you may want to use this pamphlet for distribution and discussion among your fellow union members or with students. Copies are available from IPS, 1601 Connecticut Ave., N. W., Washington, D.C., 20009, (202) 234-9382.

— MGR

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Perspectives on the Gulf Crisis, a videotape with introduction by Hon. Robert Kastenmeier and featuring: Hon. Henry Reuss, Rear Admiral Eugene Carrol (U.S. Navy, Ret.), Marcus G. Raskin and Eqbal Ahmad. This videotape includes recent footage from the Middle East as the panelists speak on the roots of the crisis and strategies for a peaceful settlement. Co-produced by the Institute for Policy Studies and the Center for Defense Information. 28 minutes (VHS)

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